

Socioeconomic Conditions



**Affecting
Health in Rural
Missouri**



Introduction

The socioeconomic conditions of the places where persons live and work have a significant impact on overall health.¹ Educational attainment and income are commonly used to measure the effect of one's socioeconomic position on health.¹ In terms of socioeconomics, rural Missourians are at a significant disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts when considering income and education.²

Persistent poverty is defined as 20% or more of the population living in poverty over the last 30 years.⁹ Twenty-nine of Missouri's rural counties are defined as having persistent poverty.² People living in poverty tend to be clustered in certain regions, counties, and neighborhoods; concentrated poverty contributes directly and indirectly to poor health conditions.⁹ The health of many of Missouri's rural residents tends to be negatively effected by the state of poverty.²

Educational Attainment

- Adults who have not finished high school are four times more likely to be in poor or fair health.⁸
- College graduates live an average of five years longer than those who did not finish high school.⁸
- Rural Missourians are half as likely to hold a college degree as urban Missourians; 16% for rural residents compared with 32% for urban residents (Figure 1).²
- In 36 of Missouri's 101 rural counties more than 20% of the population over the age of 25 does not have a high school education.⁵
- People with lower levels of education are at a higher risk of developing cardiovascular-associated risk factors.¹
- The rural death rate for heart disease per 100,000 residents is 219 for rural Missourians compared with 177 for urban residents.³
- Median weekly income and percent of unemployment in Missouri vary significantly per educational attainment (Table 1).⁵
- Lack of income and employment restricts people from obtaining proper information and care.

Figure 1. Education Levels in Missouri, 2009-2013²

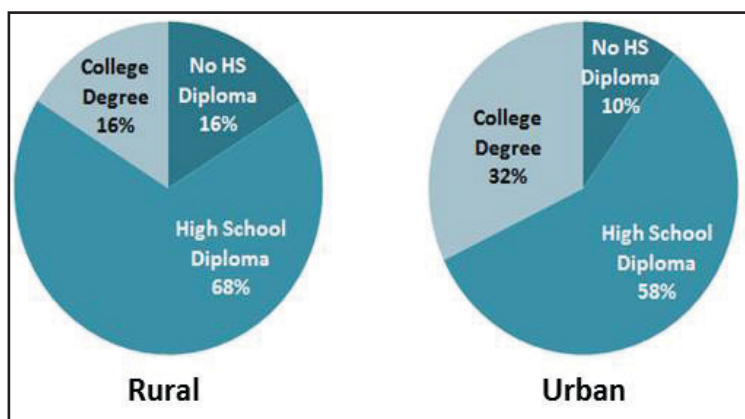


Table 1. Median Weekly Earnings and Percent of Unemployment in Missouri⁵

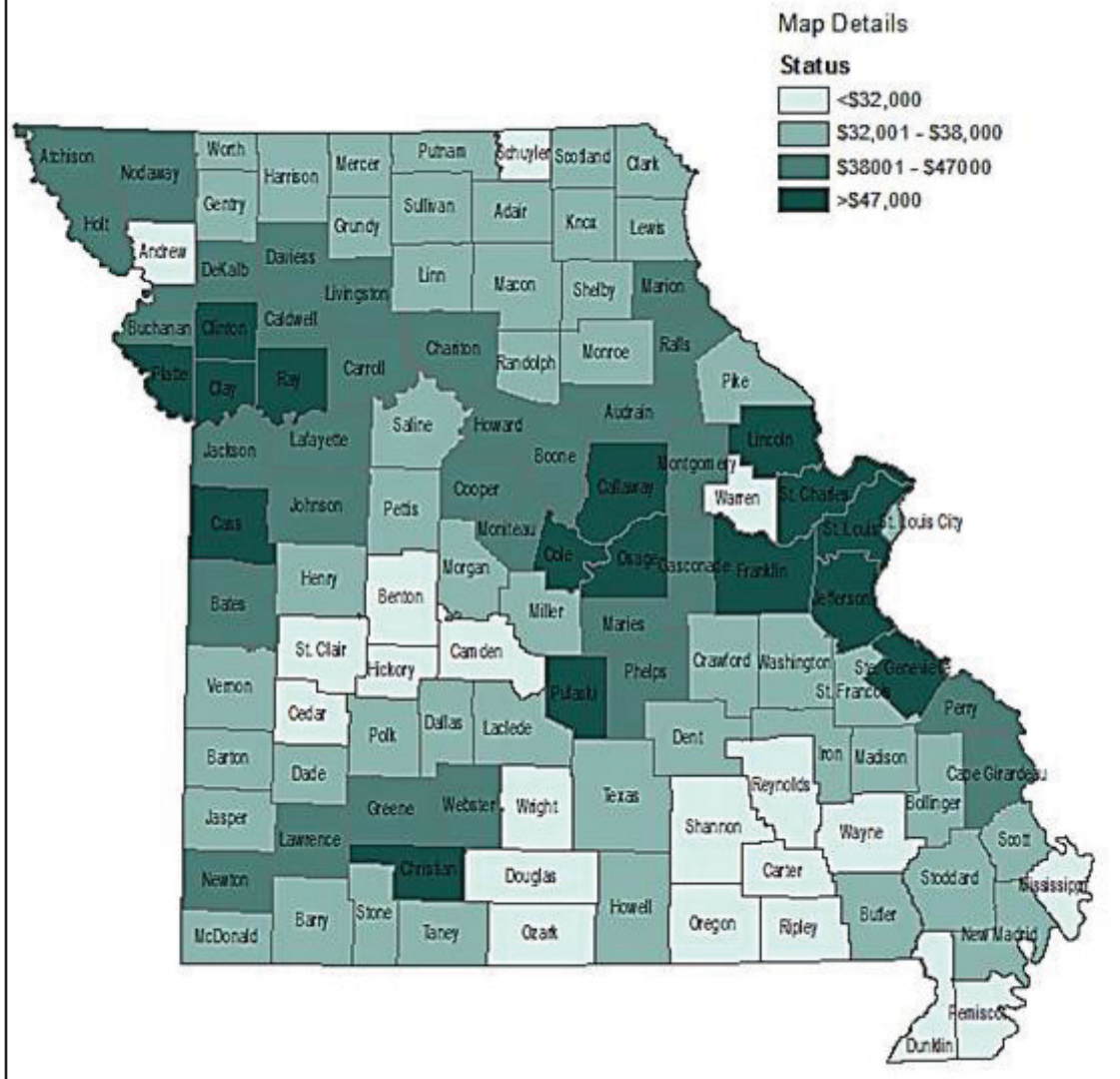
Education Attained	Un-employment	Median weekly
Doctoral Degree	2.1%	\$1,591
Professional Degree	1.9%	\$1,639
Master's Degree	2.8%	\$1,326
Bachelor's Degree	3.5%	\$1,101
Associate's Degree	4.5%	\$792
Some College, no degree	6%	\$741
High School Diploma	6%	\$668
Less than a high school diploma	9%	\$488

Income

- As of 2013, the average income for rural Missouri counties was \$33,936, compared with the average urban county income \$44,563 (23.8% percent difference).²
- Figure 2 displays the median household incomes per county.⁵
- Income poverty (family income below the poverty threshold) is a risk factor for premature mortality and increased morbidity.⁴
- People who live in poorer societies have shorter lives.⁷
- The 2004-2012 life expectancy at birth for rural Missouri residents is 76.8 years, lower than urban residents at 77.8 years.²
- The rural death rate for all causes during 2013 was 854 deaths per 100,000 residents, while in urban areas this rate was nearly 10.4% less at 773.6 deaths per 100,000.²
- A higher rate of urban residents receive hospital treatment for diseases, such as heart disease, while a higher rate of rural residents die from those diseases, possibly due to socioeconomic inequalities.²



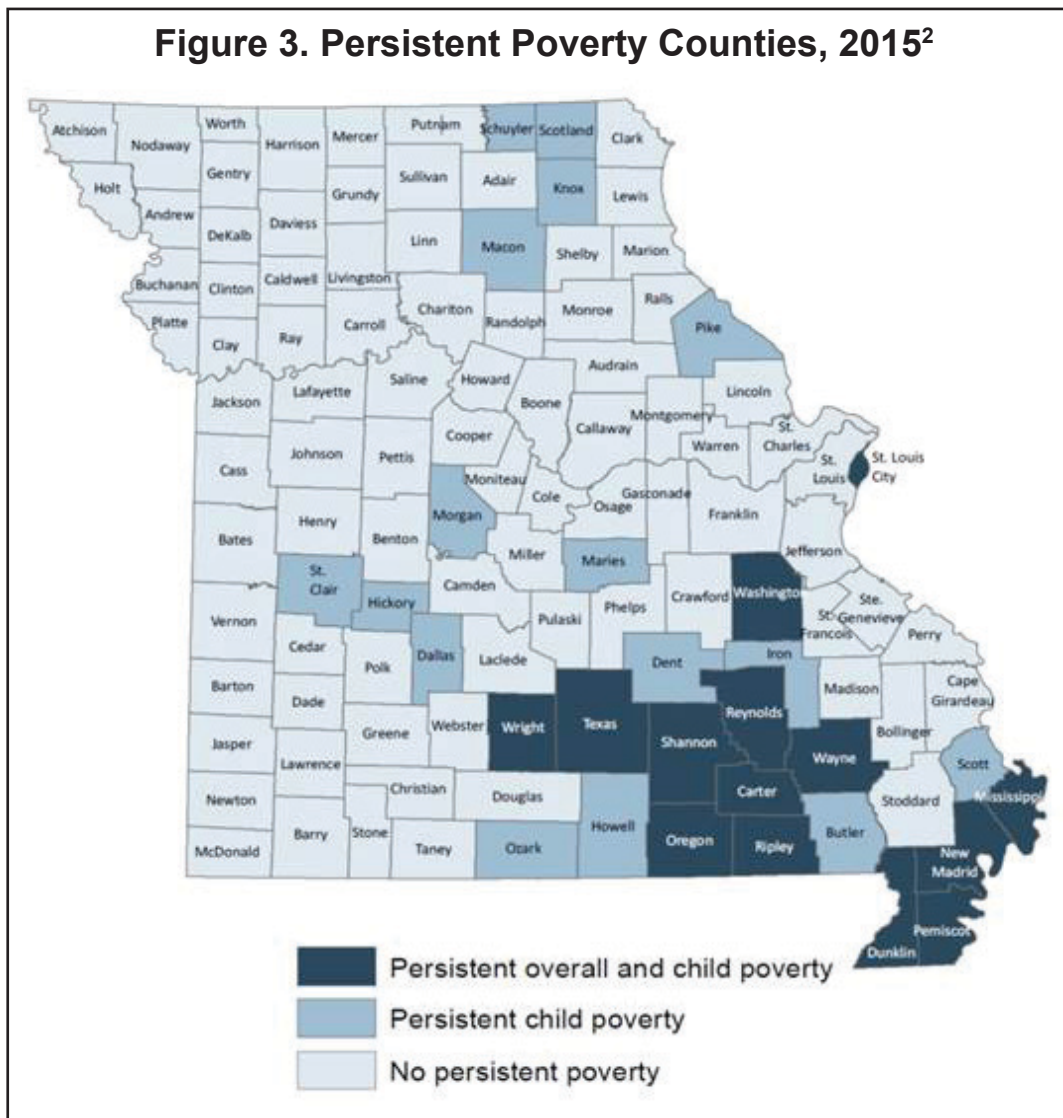
Figure 2. Median Household income per County, 2010⁶



Poverty

- The percent of rural Missouri residents under the poverty rate is 18.4% compared with 14.4% of urban residents; a 27.8% difference.²
- The percent of rural youth under the poverty rate is 27.8% compared to urban youth at 19.5%; a 37.9% difference.²
- 3 of Missouri's rural counties (Mississippi, Shannon, Pemiscot) have a poverty rate over 30%; meaning 3 out of every 10 residents in these counties live below the poverty level.²
- Persistent overall poverty is present in 14 Missouri counties, 13 of which are rural. (Figure 3).²
- Persistent poverty results in poor health care/conditions and limited prospects for residents that becomes self-perpetuating.⁹
- Persistent poverty among children leads to poor health, limited education, and additional negative outcomes.⁹
- The more time a child spends in poverty, the more likely they are to be poor as an adult.⁹
- Persistent child poverty exists in 30 Missouri counties; 29 of which are rural.²

Figure 3. Persistent Poverty Counties, 2015²



Sources

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- ⁴Inequality.org. Inequality and Health. Accessed June 4, 2016 at <http://inequality.org/inequality-health/>.
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- ⁸Robert Johnson Wood Foundation. Overcoming Obstacles to Health. Accessed June 14, 2016 at <http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/reports/2008/rwjf22441>.
- ⁹USDA. Rural Poverty and Well-being. Accessed June 1, 2016 at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-poverty-well-being.aspx>.



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